

[4 May, 2007]

RAJYA SABHA

SHRI SHARAD PAWAR: Recently, the Government of India has taken a decision to set a Rain-fed Authority which is supposed to look after rain-fed area, and a number of programmes will be implemented through that particular authority. Secondly, the ICAR's total concentration is to develop a new drought resistant variety which can be definitely used in non-irrigated areas. If we get some breakthrough in this, definitely we can move forward.

SHRIMATI S.G. INDIRA: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I thank you very much for the opportunity given to me to speak. Sir, we are talking about the import of cereals. We were in a position to export cereals from India to other countries. What are the measures that we are taking for the development of agriculture and farmers? Nowadays, we are importing all these things from foreign countries? What are the steps being taken by the Government to improve the condition of agriculture in the country?

MR. CHAIRMAN: That is all right. Let him reply.

SHRI SHARAD PAWAR: Sir, it is already given in reply as to what type of action has been taken and what types of schemes have been introduced. There are a number of schemes which have been implemented and we are spending a substantial amount of resources through the State Governments. Money has been released to the State Governments to take appropriate action. But we should not forget one thing that day by day the demand in the country is much more than what it was there some three or four years back. And 9.5 per cent growth rate, circulation of money, the changing food habits and population pressure are definitely creating problems. There is a mismatch between the production and demand and that is why we have to remove that gap.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Question Hour is over.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO STARRED QUESTIONS

Bridges awaiting rehabilitation

*425. **SHRI B.J. PANDA:** Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is fact that around 76000 old railway bridges are awaiting rehabilitation;

(b) whether at the present rate, it would take decades to complete rehabilitation;

(c) what are the details of such bridges on the ECoR which need rehabilitation; and

(d) the action plan of Government to expedite this project, to control any kind of railway bridge mishap like that of Bhagalpur?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI LALU PRASAD): (a) to (d) Instead of 76000 bridges stated, only about 4000 bridges require rehabilitation/rebuilding. Identification of bridges requiring rehabilitation/rebuilding is a continuous process during inspection of bridges. Further, the life of a Railway Bridge is not based on its age but on physical condition as ascertained by inspections. Railways have a well laid down system of multi-tier inspection of Bridges. Railway undertakes repair, rehabilitation/rebuilding of bridges on the basis of their physical condition as ascertained during inspections and not on the basis of age. Few bridges which may show signs of deterioration of physical condition indicating need for rehabilitation are classified as Distressed Bridges. These, however, are neither unsafe nor dilapidated bridges. Based on such identification of bridges, allotment of funds is made annually to carry out their repair, rehabilitation/rebuilding duly prioritizing the works as per requirement.

In 2001-02, to clear the backlog of replacement of such identified Bridges on Indian Railways, 2370 bridges were sanctioned for repair/rehabilitation/rebuilding at a cost of Rs. 1530 crores (Net) under Special Railway Safety Fund (SRSF). Subsequently 84 nos. of bridges were dropped from SRSF. Apart from SRSF, additional funds are also made available annually in Railway Budget to undertake repair/rehabilitation of fresh accruals of Bridge works under Depreciation Reserve Fund (DRF). Year-wise repair, rehabilitation/rebuilding of bridges since creation of SRSF is given as below:—

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Year	SRSF		DRF		TOTAL	
	No. of Bridges Repaired/ Rehabilitated	Expenditure (Rs. in crores)	No. of Bridges Repaired/ Rehabilitated	Expenditure (Rs. in crores)	No. of Bridge Repaired/ Rehabilitated	Expenditure (Rs. in Crores)
2001-02	280	44.10	445	63.96	725	108.06
2002-03	496	151.60	655	47.50	1151	199.1
2003-04	530	157.27	1033	71.28	1563	228.55
2004-05	375	274.26	1204	116.00	1579	390.26
2005-06	239	248.61	1192	161.98	1431	410.59
2006-07	167	261.20	947	215.15	1114	476.35
TOTAL	2087	1137.04	5476	675.87	7563	1812.91
2007-08	190 (Target) 9 Bridges for 2008-09	445.50 (Budget) Allotment)	1254 (Target)	157.10 (Budget Allotment)	1444 (Target)	602.60 (Budget Allotment)

As on 01.04.2007, about 119 no. of bridges have been sanctioned for rehabilitation on East Coast Railway which would be completed in about 4 years. Every year about 1200 bridges are rehabilitated/rebuilt by Indian Railways. Bridges which require rehabilitation/rebuilding are kept under watch and are safe for trains operations. There has been no accident on bridge account on bridges under track. It is submitted that the railway bridge mishap at Bhagalpur had occurred during dismantling of an old abandoned Road Over Bridge.

Drug licensing under one umbrella

*426. SHRI VIJAY J. DARDA:
SHRIMATI SHOBHANA BHARTIA:

Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are contemplating a single/central licensing autonomous body for pharmaceuticals on the lines of the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India;

(b) if so, whether all diverse drug authorities like the National